

## Lang Lang: Bach - Goldberg Variations (2020)

Written by bluesever (Bogdan Marszałkowski)  
Wednesday, 21 October 2020 15:13 -

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1Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Aria05:20 2Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 1 a 1 Clav.02:07 3Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 2 a 1 Clav.01:37 4Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 3 Canone all'Unisono. a 1 Clav.03:10 5Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 4 a 1 Clav.01:04 6Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 5 a 1 ovvero 2 Clav.01:22 7Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 6 Canone alla Seconda. a 1 Clav.01:13 8Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 7 a 1 ovvero 2 Clav. Al tempo di Giga02:20 9Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 8 a 2 Clav.02:00 10Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 9 Canone alla Terza. a 1 Clav. 02:13 11Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 10 Fughetta. a 1 Clav.01:40 12Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 11 a 2 Clav.02:26 13Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 12 Canone alla Quarta. (a 1 Clav.)02:10 14Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 13 a 2 Clav.06:09 15Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 14 a 2 Clav.02:18 16Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 15 Canone alla Quinta. a 1 Clav. Andante06:28 17Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 16 Ouverture. a 1 Clav.02:45 18Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 17 a 2 Clav.02:01 19Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 18 Canone alla Sesta. a 1 Clav.01:43 20Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 19 a 1 Clav.01:16 21Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 20 a 2 Clav.02:04 22Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 21 Canone alla Settima. (a 1 Clav.)04:31 23Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 22 a 1 Clav. Alla breve01:28 24Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 23 a 2 Clav.02:13 25Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 24 Canone all'Ottava. a 1 Clav.03:02 26Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 25 a 2 Clav. Adagio10:01 27Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 26 a 2 Clav.01:48 28Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 27 Canone alla Nona. a 2 Clav.01:37 29Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 28 a 2 Clav.02:05 30Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 29 a 1 ovvero 2 Clav.02:07 31Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variatio 30 Quodlibet. a 1 Clav.02:30 32Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Aria da Capo06:26 33Johann Sebastian Bach: Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Aria04:55 34Johann Sebastian

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Lang Lang has realized a lifelong dream by recording Johann Sebastian Bach's monumental

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keyboard work, the Goldberg Variations, often described as "a musical Everest". It will be released on Deutsche Grammophon on September 4, 2020 in two complementary performances given by the pianist: the first was recorded in a single take in concert at the legendary St. Thomas Church in Leipzig, Germany, Bach's workplace for almost 30 years and site of his grave; the second was made soon after in the seclusion of the studio, on the eve of the pandemic. The two recordings can be purchased together as part of a super deluxe edition, comprised of the live and studio album release.

"I'm now 38 and, while that's not old, I think the time was right for a new stage in my artistic development," comments Lang Lang. "I've moved into new terrain with the Goldberg Variations and really immersed myself fully in this project. My goal as an artist is to keep becoming more self-aware and more knowledgeable, as well as to keep offering inspiration to others. It's an ongoing process, but this project has taken me a little further along the path."

The pianist's long journey into the soul of one of the greatest landmarks of world culture began with childhood lessons in Bach's music in his native China. He was just 17 when he played the Goldberg Variations from memory for the conductor and pianist Christoph Eschenbach, an unforgettable experience for both musicians. Lang Lang subsequently sought expert advice from leading interpreters of the composer's music, conductor Nikolaus Harnoncourt and harpsichordist and early keyboard specialist Andreas Staier among them.

Having allowed his relationship with the work to evolve naturally over time, Lang Lang finally felt ready to record Bach's great "Aria" and 30 variations. In early March 2020, shortly before beginning his studio sessions, he gave a poignant public performance of the work in Leipzig. "Playing in the Thomaskirche (St. Thomas Church), where Bach is buried, was unbelievably emotional for me," he recalls. "I've never felt as close to a composer as I did during that recital. The live version is very spontaneous, whereas in the studio version my playing is different – very considered and reflective. In a concert situation you experience the 100-minute work as a whole. In the studio you can focus on individual details and nuances, and of course that can affect the musical experience quite substantially."

It's believed that Bach wrote the Goldberg Variations for his pupil, a teenage harpsichord virtuoso named Johann Gottlieb Goldberg. The composer's first biographer reported that the piece was commissioned by the Russian ambassador to the Dresden court, an insomniac, as a "soothing and cheerful" work for young Goldberg to play during the night. Published in late 1741, it demands total spiritual focus from the performer.

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"This isn't just the most exceptional and creative work in the keyboard repertoire, it's also the most multidimensional," observes Lang Lang. "It allows us to draw on everything we have within ourselves, but also makes us realize what's missing and what we still have to learn."

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